

The Laughing Willow

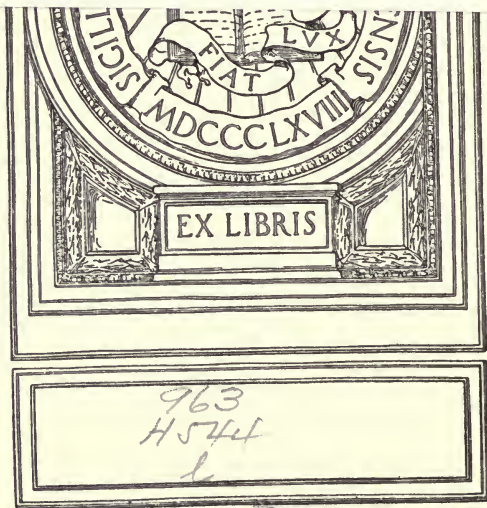


OLIVER HERFORD

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THE LAUGHING WILLOW

OLIVER HERFORD

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Apropos de Rien

THE LAUGHING WILLOW

VERSES AND PICTURES

BY

OLIVER HERFORD

Author of "Artful Antics," "The Child's Primer of Natural
History," "Overheard in a Garden," "Fairy Godmother-
in-Law," "Astonishing Tale of a Pen and Ink
Puppet," "The Confessions of a
Caricaturist," etc.



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TO PEG

*Oh, should some power the giftie gie her
To see hersel' as ithers see her,
I'm thinking Peg would grow sae vain
He'd take the giftie back again.*



CONTENTS

THE LAUGHING WILLOW

	PAGE
EPITAPHS	9
THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA	11
THE WEDDING FEAST	11
A MUJIK	12
THE COSSACK	13
THE THREE S'S	14
THE AIR RAID	15
VALE DIABOLE	18
THE WRONG FLOOR	21
MARCHING TO BERLIN	23
TARGET PRACTICE	26
THE SAUSAGE BALLOON	27
CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE	28
CAMOUFLAGE	31
THE TANK	32
THE BIRD-MAN	33
FRENZYLOGICAL CHART	34
BRITANNIA SALVATRIX	35
FATHER WILHELM	37
THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS	40
AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE	45
THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM	52
WAR RELIEF	57
SUMMER MASS	58

Contents

ABOUT PEOPLE I HAVE MET	PAGE
J. M. BARRIE	61
THE HORSE	63
THE TOWN CAT	65
TOWSER	68
THE OYSTER	70
THE MOUSE	71

PEOPLE I HAVE NOT MET	
THE TURTLE	77
MICHAEL O'LEARY	79
CLORINDA	82
ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER	85
EVE	90
THE HIGH BROW HEN	91
SIR IPPYKIN	92
THE PSYCHOLOGY COP	95
PHYLLIS LEE	97
MRS. SEYMOUR FENTOLIN	99
THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES	101
SPRING	105
THE CATFISH	108
THE PRODIGAL CENTIPEDE	109
A BALLADE OF BLACK SOCKS	111

OTHER PEOPLE INCLUDING MARK TWAIN	
THE GENTLEMEN OF LETTERS	115
THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS	118
MARK TWAIN	121
PRINCE POMPOM	124
THE SERIAL	126
THE CLOUD	130

THE LAUGHING WILLOW

*To see the Kaiser's epitaph
Would make a weeping willow laugh.*



THE LAUGHING WILLOW

EPITAPHS

Willy Nilly

HERE lies Willy's mortal clay ;

In its Mother Earth's caresses.

Willy's soul has flown away—

Where it is you have two guesses.

Here lies Bill

Here lies Bill, the son of Fred.

He lied alive ; he now lies dead.

Tears, Idle Tears

Oh, stranger, dry the starting tear !

Kaiser Bill is buried here.

Pax

'Neath this stone lies Kaiser Bill.

He sought for peace—he seeks it still.

The Laughing Willow

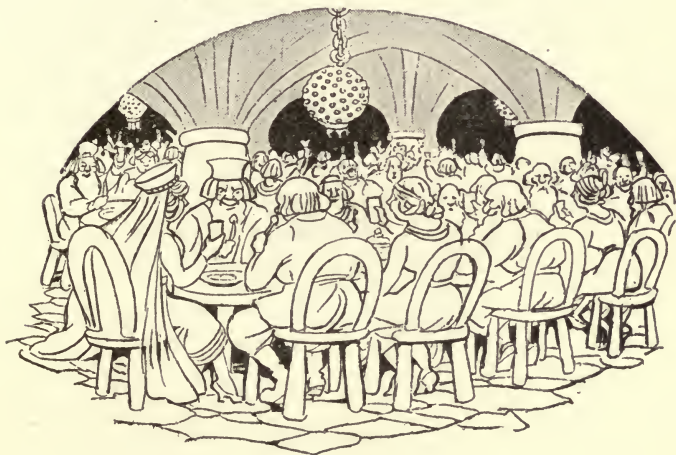
Requiescat

Here Wilhelm sleeps. For Mercy's sake,
Tread softly, friend, lest he should wake!

Ashes to Ashes

Swallow him, O Earth, for he,
Did his best, to "swallow thee.

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA



THE WEDDING FEAST

· THIS is a Russian Wedding Feast;
Counting the Groom, there are at least
A hundred sitting down to dine,
Or let us call it ninety-nine:
For more than that there is no room,
And no one ever counts the Groom!

The Laughing Willow

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[*Continued*]

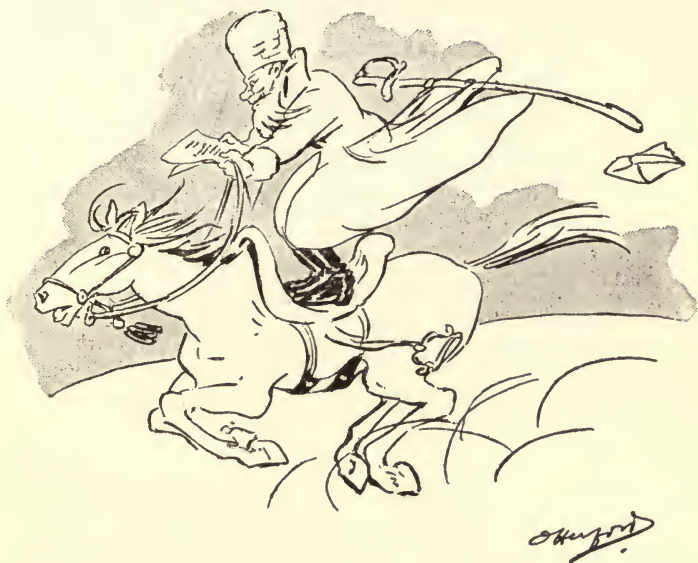
A MUJIK

The Mujik wears a costume weird
Consisting of a fuzzy beard,
A sheep-skin blouse (the wool inside)
And breeks astonishingly wide,
Made from the fur of North sea Whales,
And Yak-hide boots with big brass nails.



The Laughing Willow

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[Continued]



THE COSSACK

The Cossack is so much at home
Upon his horse, that though he roam
From Vladivostok to Odessa,
His wife has only to address a
Letter to Ivan "care his Horse"
To catch her Spouse, unless of course,
As sometimes happens, Ivan may
Have swapped addresses on the way.

The Laughing Willow

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[*Continued*]

THE THREE S'S

Without a doubt the *Samovar*
The *Steppes* and *Russian Sables* are
Of all things Russian the best known;
So in this picture I have shown



A Sable sitting on a flight
Of Russian Steppes, before a bright
New Samovar, calm as can be,
Brewing a cup of Russian Tea.



THE AIR RAID

I

COME into the cellar, Maud.
Get a move on! Goodness gracious,
There is nothing to applaud
In bravado ostentatious!
Still Maud lingered, all unheeding,
As the Siren sounded twice;
Above the din her voice came pleading,
"Are you *sure* there's no mice?"

II

Above the pandemonium
Of Siren shrill and warning Drum
And Aircraft Gun is heard the roar
Of little Freddy, ætat four;

The Laughing Willow

THE AIR RAID—[*Continued*]

The cellar dark and dank and dim
No fascination has for him,
The little darling wants to be
Upstairs upon the roof and see
The “fireworks!” “If you ask me—”
Aunt Kate was overheard to say,
“I’d let the dear child have his way!”

III

A hidden Crime, however slight,
Is sure some day to see the light;
Oh, why did Auntie come to stay
With us upon an Air-raid day!
Why did we never think to tell her
That there were Lizards in the cellar
Or Spiders or an Open Drain!
How shall we ever now explain
That “Antique Vase” we said was lost,
That Nile green horror, gold embossed,
Her Wedding Present—there it lay
Before her eyes, as plain as day!
We *almost* wished a bomb would fall
Upon the house and end it all!

IV

Who is that cowardly Jack Horner
Crouching there in the darkest corner,

The Laughing Willow

THE AIR RAID—[*Continued*]

Behind the furnace? Look again,
That is no cringing coward, when
Your eyes become accustomed to
The darkness of the cellar, you
Will see it is no other than
Philander Jones and Marian;
Make no mistake, Philander's dread
Is not a Zeppelin overhead,
But that rude moment when he'll hear
The beastly Siren sound "All's clear!"

v

"Where is Molly?" Like a Shell,
Short and sharp, the question fell,
Scattering every one pell mell
From the cellar's safe retreat
Through the house on panic feet,
Basement, Attic—everywhere
They sought, one hope remained and there
On the Drying-roof they found her,
Shrapnel flashing all around her,
Calm and cool 'mid war's alarms,
Hugging something in her arms.
'T's all right—don't cwy!" said Molly,
'I tame back to det my dolly!"

The Laughing Willow

VALE DIABOLE

AT a recent church conference it was decided to drop the Devil from the ritual.

WELL! Well! so you've been fired,
You've lost your job at last.
It's high time you retired,
Old Boy, you're failing fast.



The Laughing Willow

VALE DIABOLE—[*Continued*]

You're getting old, you know it,
You are not in the race.
Admit you cannot go it,
The killing, modern pace.

Your methods are too dull for
The modern school of Hate,
Your lake of burning sulphur
Is sadly out of date.

The Hohenzollern's Kultur
Mocks at your fiery pits,
His double-headed vulture
Has put yours on the fritz.

Beside the fierce, blaspheming,
Mail-fisted Kaiser Bill,
You are a seraph beaming,
An angel of good-will.

But tho' we can't deny, sir,
You're hopelessly outclassed,
You've one thing on the Kaiser,
Which is, tho' first and last

The Laughing Willow

VALE DIABOLE—[*Continued*]



A failure as a devil,
Yet boast of this you can;
You were always on the level—
And—you are a gentleman!

THE WRONG FLOOR

A CERTAIN Emperor
(This is a censored tale)
Once pounded on the door
Of heaven with fist of mail.



Cried Peter from within,
Awakened by the row,
"Stop that infernal din!
Who are you, anyhow?"

The Laughing Willow

THE WRONG FLOOR—[*Continued*]

“Don’t bandy words with me!”

Thundered the visitor.

“All doors to me are free.

I am the Emperor.”

“If you’re an Emperor,”

Said Peter, “then I fear

You’ve come to the wrong floor.

We take no Emperors here.

“Our waiting list is filled

With martyrs brave and true

Whose blood an Emperor spilled.

There is no room for you.”

Cowed by Saint Peter’s look,

The Emperor, with a frown,

Cried, “Well, I’m damned!” and took

The elevator—down.

The Laughing Willow

MARCHING TO BERLIN

WE come from God's own country in the ships of
Uncle Sam;

We're going to get the william-goat of Kaiser
Will—i—am;

We know it is *verboden*, but we do not give a
damn,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin!

Berlin! Berlin! Berlin!

As we go marching to Berlin!

Refrain

Hurray! Hurray! We'll wave the Stripes and
Stars!

Away, away with Emperors and Czars!

And when we get the Kaiser we'll put him behind
the bars,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

The Laughing Willow

MARCHING TO BERLIN—[*Continued*]

We're from the dear old U. S. A., the Land of
Liberty;

We've crossed a hundred rivers and three thousand
miles of sea

To teach the Huns a thing or two about Democracy,
As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

Refrain

Hurray! Hurray! We'll show the Prussian swine
That Freedom is the only Right Divine,
And when we catch old Kaiser Bill we'll pitch him
in the Rhine,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

We've left our happy homes that we may help to
win the war.

We're a million strong already, and there'll soon be
millions more;

And when the job is done with Kaiser Bill we'll
mop the floor,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

The Laughing Willow

MARCHING TO BERLIN—[*Continued*]

Refrain

Hurray ! Hurray ! We're going to make it hot
For all the bloody Hohenzollern lot,
And when we get the Kaiser we'll present him to
his Gott,

As we go marching to Berlin !

(*Drums*) Berlin ! Berlin !

Berlin ! Berlin ! Berlin !

As we go marching to Berlin !

The Laughing Willow

TARGET PRACTICE

At the Imperial schützenfest
Fritz Pickelheim led all the rest;



At target practice Pickelheim
Could hit the Red Cross every time;

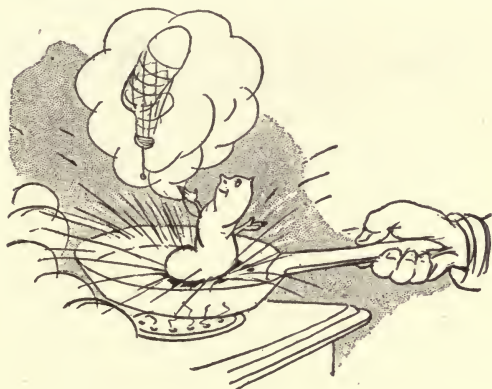
At the clay-baby contest Fritz
Scored nineteen out of twenty hits;



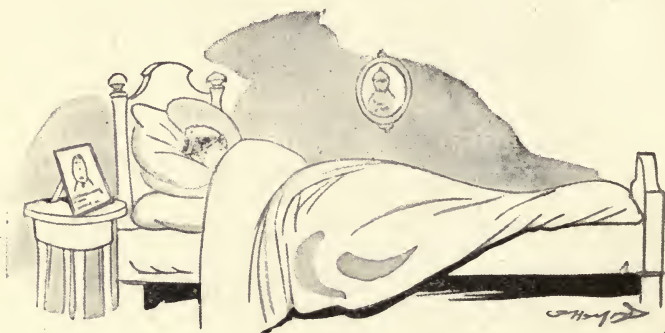
And once he won the Kaiser's purse
With nine live babies and a nurse.

THE SAUSAGE BALLOON

I OFTEN wonder, when we fry
A Sausage, if its thoughts can fly



Across the billowy ocean wave
To where its namesake stern and brave
Floats like a Guardian Angel, high
Above our armies, in the sky,
Serene and stately as a cloud.
No wonder Sausages are proud!
No wonder Sausages when fried
Oft-times swell up and burst with pride!



CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE

I

WHEN Crown Prince Willy goes to bed
It is his wont to lay his head
Upon the pillow and extend
His feet towards the other end.
“But does he really wear his hat
In bed?” you ask—well, as to that
I cannot say, I never saw him,
But that’s the way *I* always draw him.

II

The thing that Germans most admire
Is Crownie’s coolness under fire.

The Laughing Willow

CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE—[*Continued*]

He loves to watch it gleam and glow
'Mid fragrant smoke, an inch or so
Above his nose as he reclines
In some Château behind the lines;
If the Crown Prince had his desire
He would be *always* under fire!

III

When you or I get up at eight
We do not have to cogitate
And rack our brains concerning just
Which suit to wear, as Princes must;
The Crown Prince has a hundred suits,
Including hats and belts and boots,
Yet such his master-mind, he knows
Which he must wear and just what goes
With what, which chevron, sash or sword,
Each in his Royal Head is stored,
Down to the detail of a spur,
All in a Nut-shell, as it were!

IV

Here is a most uncensored sight!
The Prince, in garb Pre-Adamite
Taking (but tell it not in Gath)
A good old English shower-bath!

The Laughing Willow

CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE—[*Continued*]



v

The Prince's shy and shrinking habit
Has earned for him the nickname "Rabbit."
This irritates His Highness more
Than all his country's grief and gore,
It hurts his *amour propre*, for it's
A clear case of the "Cap that fits."
But don't you think, however funny,
It's rather rough upon the Bunny?



CAMOUFLAGE

If you can stand upon one spot
And look like something you are not
And wouldn't if you could be—say
A Bean-bag or a Bale of Hay—
You'll find it quite a useful stunt
To practise on the Western Front;
This picture shows how Private Dunne,
Disguised as snow, deceived the Hun,
Who could not possibly see through
The Camouflage: no more can you!

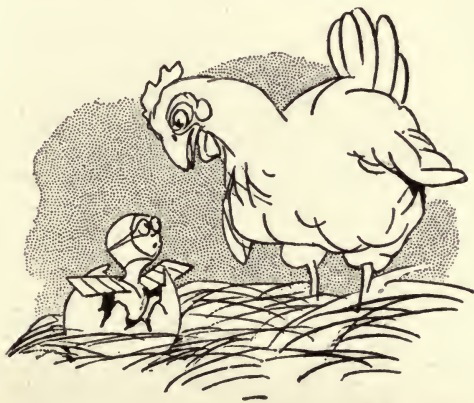
THE TANK

THE Tank's a kind of cross between
An Agricultural Machine
And something fierce and Pliocene;
Over embankments, trees, and walls,
Trenches, barbed-wire, and forts it crawls;
Nothing can stay its course—the Tank
Has not the least respect for Rank
Or File; with equal joy it squashes
All things alike, men, beasts, and—Boches.



THE BIRD-MAN

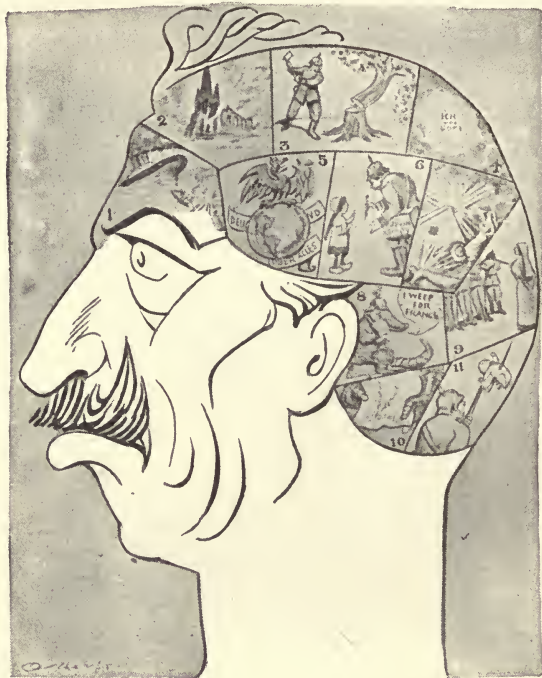
THE Bird-man does not chirp and sing
As Larks and Robins do in Spring,
He does not moult nor does he feed
On Earthworms or Canary-seed,



Nor does the Bird-man build a nest
In which his weary wings to rest;
At night, instead, when he goes home
To roost, he seeks an Aërodrome.

The Laughing Willow

FRENZYLOGICAL CHART



- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Humanity. | 6. Generosity. |
| 2. Veneration. | 7. Compassion. |
| 3. Love of Nature. | 8. Sympathy. |
| 4. Modesty. | 9. Chivalry. |
| 5. Imagination. | 10. Integrity. |
| 11. Love of Children. | |

The Laughing Willow

BRITANNIA SALVATRIX

MISTRESS of the Trident dread,
With the brow of Artemis,
Like Minerva, helmeted,
Seven Seas her sandals kiss.



The Laughing Willow

BRITANNIA SALVATRIX—[*Continued*]

Throbs a mighty heart withal
Beneath her armour of Disdain.
Not for naught did Belgium call,
Servia has not cried in vain.

When the gauge of Hate was hurled,
Seven seas at her behest,
From the corners of the world
Brought the bravest and the best.

From the utmost ends of earth,
On their tireless waves they bore,
To the Europe of their birth,
Legions of the land and air,

Spurning Peace, till Peace has brought
Hohenzollern to his fall,
And with the blood of Freemen bought
A Place in Freedom's Sun for all.

The Laughing Willow

FATHER WILHELM

To the Tune of Lewis Carroll



“You are old, Father Wilhelm,” the Crown Prince
said,

“And the hair’s growing thin on your pate;
Do you think you are perfectly right in your head—
The way you’ve been acting of late?”

The Laughing Willow

FATHER WILHELM—[*Continued*]

“In my youth,” Father Wilhelm replied to his son,
“I hated my honour to stain
But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again.”

“You are old,” said the Prince, “and you’re getting
quite bent,
And rheumatic, yet only just now,
You turned a back somersault into your tent—
Pray why did you do it, and how?”

“In my youth,” Kaiser Wilhelm replied to the
Prince,
“I kept all my muscles in training;
And I’ve practised one thing that I learned, ever
since—
And that’s to go in when it’s raining.”

“You are old,” said the Prince, “and your head
is too light
For anything stronger than water;
Yet you talk without ceasing from morning till
night;
Do you think, at your age, that you oughter?”

“In my youth,” said the Kaiser, “I lived upon raw
Spanish onions, I ate with my knife;

The Laughing Willow

FATHER WILHELM—[*Continued*]

And the strength that those onions gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.”

“You are old,” said the Kronprins, “and one would
suppose,

You would be just a little more humble;

Yet you balance your crown on the end of your nose.

Aren’t you frightened some day it will tumble?”



“Your questions, my boy, are getting too free,”
The Kaiser with anger protested—

“Your impudence borders on *Lesé Majesté*;
Be off, or I’ll have you arrested.”

The Laughing Willow

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS

To the Tune of W. S. Gilbert



MAJOR FRITZ - SCHINKENWURST HOFBRAU VON BEERS

Was the pride and the joy of the Pruss Grenadiers.
You've guessed him a Prussian, shrewd reader, at
sight,
And a glance at his manners will prove you are right.

In his fervour for "Frightfulness" Major Von Beers
Acknowledged no betters and precious few peers.

The Laughing Willow

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—
[Continued]

And every one envied his well-earned repute
For arson and pillage and rapine and loot.

No symphony held such delectable tones
For the ears of Von Beers as the shrieks and the
groans
Of women and children bombarded with shell,
Or the crash of a hospital tumbling pell-mell.

One day from Berlin came the order "Refrain
For the present from Frightfulness. Start Press
Campaign.
Von Bernstorff has wired we're getting in wrong
With the Yankees, so play up HUMANITY strong."

Loud, loud were the wailings of Hofbrau Von Beers.
But duty is duty, so drying his tears,
He purchased a volume by Peter F. Dunne
On "How to be Civilised, though you're a Hun."

The Laughing Willow

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—
[Continued]

He swatted up Honour, and Peace and Good-will
For a year seven months and a fortnight until,
You'll scarcely believe it, that Hun I declare
Acquired a sort of a civilised air.

It was balky, spasmodic and apt to take flight
When a press correspondent was nowhere in sight.
It was clumsy, uncertain and crude, I'm aware,
Yet distinctly suggested a civilised air.

He started at once a colossal campaign
And filled correspondents with fibs and champagne,
And the press correspondents all voted Von Beers
A prince of good fellows, 'mid deafening cheers.

Thenceforth when a soldier forgot to salute,
Von Beers would use kindness instead of his boot.
And he lectured a laggard he'd rather have shot,
If a newspaper man chanced to be on the spot.

The Laughing Willow

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS— [Continued]



If a sentinel, smoking, he happened to catch,
Instead of a hiding he gave him a match.
A caress took the place of a clout on the ear,
That is, when a war correspondent was near.

He distributed photos of Godfearing Huns
Feeding babies with Beef Broth, Bananas and Buns,
And snapshots of Willie that caught his gay glance
And others depicting him weeping for France.

The Laughing Willow

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—
[Continued]

The fame of Von Hofbrau spread over the land,
And rich Lady nurses proposed for his hand,



And the Kaiser, All Highest, 'mid deafening tears
Pinned a cast-iron Halo on Major Von Beers.

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE

A Sniffle in One Act

CHARACTERS

THE GERMAN EMPEROR . . .

Others not to be mentioned in the same cast.

SCENE

A luxurious dressing room adjoining the Emperor's Bedroom.

TIME

This morning. The Emperor is discovered standing before a Cheval Glass. He is dressed in what is known as "Athletic Underwear," with plain black socks, upheld by Boston Garters.

EMPEROR: It is not often that one sees

An Emperor in B. V. D.'s.

A knock is heard on the door.

EMPEROR: Herein!

A high officer enters with a telegram.

A wire?

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]



OFFICER: Yes, Sire, a wire!

EMPEROR: *Tears open envelope.*

You may retire.

Reads

Von Hindenburg has wired to say
Our noble troops have won the day
Captured a Russian Samovar
And several tons of caviar
Vodka a fabulous amount
And Droskys more than we can count
The greatest battle of the war,

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

Won by the Fourteenth Army Corps
All honour to the Lord therefore,
Likewise the Fourteenth Army Corps.

CHORUS OF OFFICERS:

All honour to the Lord therefore,
Not to speak of the Fourteenth Army Corps.

EMPEROR:

The Lord Be Praised! This cheering news
Will cure my cold and banish my blues.
I haven't felt anything like so well
Since my gallant Navy with shot and shell
Bombarded the Scarborough Infant School
And the Orphan Asylum at Hartlepool.

CHORUS OF OFFICERS:

He hasn't felt anything like so well
Since the Babes were bombarded with shot
and shell.



The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

EMPEROR:

Enough! Enough! Less cheering please
With my nervous system it disagrees.
Alas! My joy
Is not without alloy.

Looks at telegram sadly.

Oh wretched me! On this glorious day
When I should have been in the thick of the
fray
I lay in bed
With a cold in my head:
Hot water bottles, Quinine and Squills
Mustard Plasters, and Camphor Pills.
And when they tell of this victory
They do not so much as mention ME!
While peans of praise and plaudits pour
On the Lord—and the Fourteenth Army
Corps!

Weeps.

Enter chorus of Highborn Lady Nurses bearing clinical thermometers.

FIRST NURSE:

Oh Sire we entreat!

SECOND NURSE:

This is most indiscreet!

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

THIRD NURSE:

A temperature we dread—

FOURTH NURSE:

Oh *please* go back to bed—

FIRST NURSE:

Please do as you are told,

You have an awful cold.

EMPEROR: *Furious.*

A cold!!

NURSE:

I meant to say

Broncho-Pneumonia.

EMPEROR:

Mine was no common plebeian ill,

'Twas a Pneumo-Psycho-Bronchial chill

According to my medical adviser

I caught it when I walked upon the Yser.

NURSE:

You walked!

EMPEROR:

I should have said I tried—

You see it was high tide

And I was much annoyed

To find the bridge destroyed.

But never at a loss

I tried to walk across.

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[Continued]

Angrily

But by the Eternal One

I swear it can't be done

And never was——

Stops suddenly and makes as if about to sneeze.

Nurses regard him apprehensively.

Emperor sneezes.

FIRST NURSE:

Ach! Himmel! what a sneeze!

SECOND NURSE:

Oh Sire! Please!——

THIRD NURSE:

Oh *please!*

FOURTH NURSE:

Your cold's gone to your head!

ALL TOGETHER:

You **MUST** go back to bed!

*They seize the Emperor and pull him, struggling,
through the door leading to the bedroom.*

EMPEROR:

Nein! Nein! Unhand me, wenchess!

My place is in the trenches.

Enter High Officer.

[50]

The Laughing Willow

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

HIGH OFFICER: *Looks about him cautiously.*

'Tis an ill wind they say
That profits nobody,
And this Imperial sneeze
May bring us victories,
With Him in bed there'll be
Some chance for strategy.
If on the other hand————

EMPEROR: *Heard off stage*

What ho! My horse!

The Emperor enters

HIGH OFFICER: *Anxiously*

You go?

EMPEROR: *Haughtily*

Of course!

CURTAIN



THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM

Surnamed the Tentbreaker

I

AH, Franz! Could you and I with Gott conspire
To grab this sorry little globe entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to our heart's desire?

II

You all know how, the world to overwhelm
I made a second Sparta of my realm
And "dropped the Pilot" from my ship of State
To lay my own mailed fist upon the helm.

The Laughing Willow

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

III

AND how myself did eagerly frequent
Councils of war and heard great argument
About it and about, and every year
Came out with great and greater armament.

IV

For though in ME and MINE I set great store
And THEE and THINE are terms that I abhor,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—war.

V

Bernhardi, Nietzsche, Treitschke, who discussed
Of the "Next War," so wisely, they are thrust
Like foolish prophets forth, their words to scorn
Are scattered and their mouths are stopped with
dust.

VI

With them the seed of warfare did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it
grow.

The Laughing Willow

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

And this is all the Harvest I have reaped:
"I came like thunder—and like wind I go!"

VII

And lately from Hell's Cavern Door rose up
A shape Titanic, ravening to sup
On Living Human Fodder, and he bade
Me give him taste of it; and 'twas—The Krupp.

VIII

The Krupp that can with Logic absolute
The plans of modern Strategists confute
The steel iconoclast that in a trice
The strongest Fortress into Dust transmute.

IX

The Krupp no question makes of Aye and No,
But strikes alike Cathedral or Château
And I who send it out into the Field—
I know about it all—I know—I know!

X

And much as War has made an infidel
Of me, and robbed me of my honour, well

The Laughing Willow

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

I often wonder what the Devil has
One half so devilish as I—In Hell!

XI

Ah, but *my* innovations people say
Placed war upon a sounder basis? Nay,
'Twas only striking from War's lexicon
The terms TRUTH, HONOUR, DECENCY, FAIR PLAY.

XII

The Treaties that I set my seal upon
Are turned to dust and ashes, which anon
Like snowflakes falling in a muddy street
Lighting a little hour or two are gone.

XIII

What if my sword can fling the Sheath aside
And naked plunge into the crimson tide,
Were't not a shame, were't not a shame for me,
By a "mere scrap of paper" to abide?

XIV

Indeed, indeed, continually I swore
For Peace—but was I solemn when I swore?

The Laughing Willow

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

And then—then came the Day and sword in
hand
My threadbare piety apieces tore.

* * *

XV

From Europe's centre, through the Belgian gate
I rode and at the Door of Paris sate.

And many a city ravished by the road,
But Paris—she is still immaculate.

XVI

Here was the Gate to which I found no key;
Here was the Wall o'er which I might not see.

Some little talk awhile of strategy
There was, and then—good afternoon, Paree!



WAR RELIEF



"CAN you spare a Threepenny bit,
Dear Miss Turkey," said Sir Mouse,
"For Job's Turkey's benefit?
I've engaged the Opera House!"

"Alas! I've naught to spare!"
Said Miss Turkey, "save advice,
I am getting up a Fair,
To relieve the Poor Church Mice."

SUMMER MASS

IN the cloisters of the grass,
Lit by buttercups and daisies,
Celebrants of summer mass,
Little creatures sing their praises.
From a myriad throbbing throats
Rises up their song of Love,
Like a mist of golden motes,
To the Golden Throne above.
And the good Lord, bending nigh,
Quite forgets his house of stone
Where the frightened sinners cry,
And the frowning priests intone,
And the saints (if saints they be)
Smile and smile in effigy.

ABOUT PEOPLE I HAVE MET

ABOUT PEOPLE I HAVE MET

J. M. BARRIE

*A Round Robin from His Humble and Devoted Servants the
Alphabet*

THE Lord forgive if we trangress
Thus to familiarly address
One of our betters.
But, Jamie, do you no recall
The slate whereon you learned to scrawl
Your Humble Letters?

Well we remember how you drew
Our shapely features all askew,
Unflattering really.
You made A lame and B too fat.
And C too curly—what of that!
We loved you dearly.

From that first day we owned your spell.
And just because you used us well
We served you blindly.
Why, even when you put us through
A fearsome Scottish reel, we knew
You meant it kindly.

The Laughing Willow

J. M. BARRIE—[*Continued*]

Jamie, 'tis said Grand Tales there be
Still biding in the A B C—

 If this be true,
Quick, Jamie! Cast your golden net.
Maybe we have the grandest yet
 In store for you.



THE HORSE

 THE Horse, I don't mind telling you,
Is not an easy thing to do. 

 With Cats and Lions, I confess,
I've had a measure of success; 

 Likewise with Camels, Mice and Snails
And Frogs and Butterflies and Whales. 

The Laughing Willow

THE HORSE—[*Continued*]



Eels and Rhinoc'rules and Ants

And Porcupines and Elephants



And Bees and Yaks and Owls. But when

I try to draw a Horse, my pen



Sputters and scares the high-strung steed,

Who gallops off at such a speed



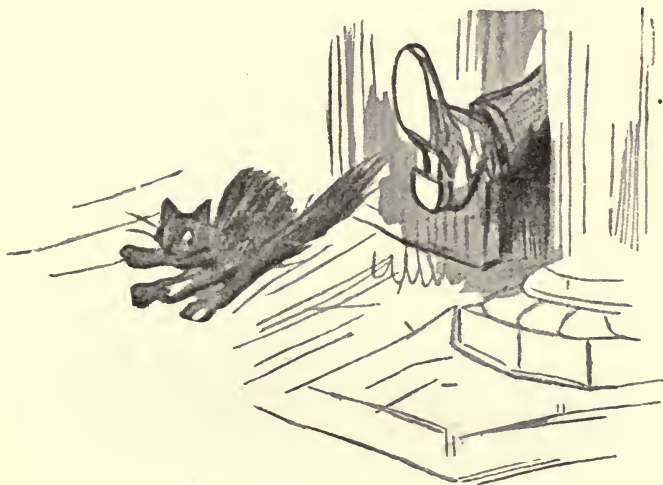
You have to take the beast on trust—

You can not see him for the dust.



THE TOWN CAT

THE melancholy days are come,
The saddest of the year;
Of houses closed and doorbells dumb
And windows dark and drear.



Now Dives to his country seat
Has hied himself away,
And Tabby turned into the street
Must shift as best she may.

The Laughing Willow

THE TOWN CAT—[*Continued*]

No more the cushion soft as silk,
The catnip ball no more;
No more the saucer full of milk
Behind the pantry door.

Nor shall she in the temple prey
Upon the lean church mouse;
The good Lord, too, has gone away
And closed his city house.



The Laughing Willow

THE TOWN CAT—[*Continued*]

When Dives hies him back once more
To his town house, oh, shame!
Tabby will greet him at the door,
But not—no, not the same.

TOWSER

My hair hangs down on either side
Like a Niagara small.
Why is it this, my greatest pride,
Should bring about my fall?



Why is it that my well brushed hair,
That now so smoothly lies,
As soon as I descend the stair
Always gets in my eyes?

The Laughing Willow

TOWSER—[*Continued*]

No wonder, thus deprived of sight,
I step on empty air
And to the bottom of the flight
Rebound from stair to stair.

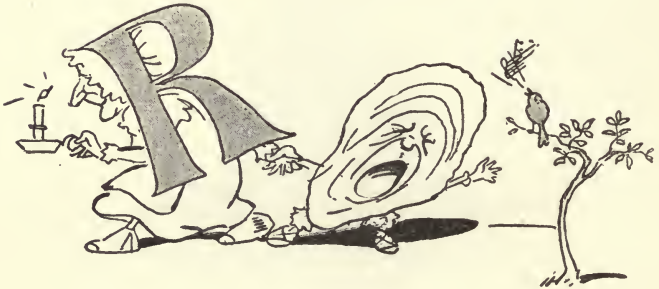
I'm not the sort of dog that cares
To make a fuss when hit;
But falling down a flight of stairs
Is not the worst of it.



As there I lie completely out
Of breath and very flat,
Why is it *always* some one stout
That takes me for a mat?

THE OYSTER

IN Autumn, when the leaves are dead,
They take us from our Oyster-bed,
And all the winter long they keep
Us up, without a wink of sleep—



And doesn't it seem hard to you
When Spring is here, and skies are blue,
And we should like so much to stay,
We have to be in bed by MAY?

The Laughing Willow

THE MOUSE

A Study in Egotisms

Scene: A drawing-room.

Persons: Clarissa, the Mouse, Purrline.

CLARISSA: Help! Help! A Mouse!

MOUSE: Don't be alarmed! *I'm* here!

I hurried when I heard you scream—

CLARISSA: Oh, dear!

If it jumps up at me I shall expire!

MOUSE: If I may be permitted to enquire,

Why are you standing there in such a fright,

Upon a chair, clutching your frock so tight

About your—

CLARISSA: Help! Oh dear! I wonder what

That girl's about! Good heavens! I forgot

It's Jane's day out. There's no one in the house

But me—

MOUSE: Fair lady! I am but a Mouse,

A simple Mouse, but underneath this fur

There beats a heart whose motto is *Sans Purr*.

To see a lovely female in distress

Rouses in me the spirit of *Noblesse*.

THE MOUSE—[*Continued*]

CLARISSA: If only Jane were here!
What *shall* I do?

Well,

CLARISSA: Mercy! I wonder why
It squeaks like that! It's crazy! I shall die
If it—

MOUSE: Sweet lady! Though I cannot guess
From your queer speech the cause of your dis-
tress,

Your voice, quite meaningless to my M^{ou}se ear,
Is strangely sweet and musical and clear;
And, though they violate our beauty-laws,
I never saw such shapely hinder paws

The Laughing Willow

THE MOUSE—[*Continued*]

As yours, so smooth and beautiful to see,
So silky white, like sticks of celery.
Upon each side a tender sprig of gold—
Gold as pure Cheese, and toothsome to behold—
Climbs up and up! 'Tis called, so I am told
By Mice more versed in lady-lore, a Clock.
Once, it is said, a Mouse named Dickery Dock
Ran up the—

CLARISSA: Ouch!!!

MOUSE: I wonder if I dare!
Only the brave deserve—

CLARISSA: O Lord! This chair
Is giving way! If it should break!—What's
that?

It's Purrline's mew! Here, Puss! Puss!—

MOUSE: What? The Cat!
I'd *love* to meet him! But it's getting late.
My wife's expecting me. I musn't wait!

PURRLINE: Me-ouw!

CLARISSA: And is that *all* you've got to say?
Did you expect the Mouse to wait all day?
For all *you* care, I might have died of fright!
My! But I'm glad it got away all right!

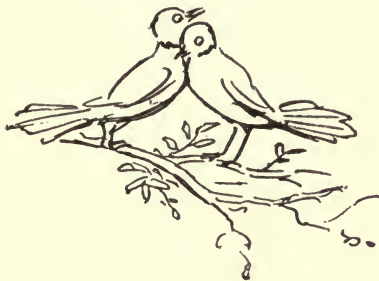
CURTAIN

PEOPLE I HAVE NOT MET

PEOPLE I HAVE NOT MET

THE TURTLE

I NEVER wasted any love
On turtles, but the turtle-dove
Is quite another thing;
When I have nothing else to do,
I love to hear them bill and coo
While mating in the spring.



There's something in their plaintive note
That brings a lump into my throat
And makes my pulses stir;
Something between a smothered sn
And the shrill creaking of a door,
That soothes me, as it were.

The Laughing Willow

THE TURTLE—[Continued]



How strange is Nature's alchemy,
To think that living in the sea
Should change a creature so!
The turtle of the finny kind
That swims the sea, is to my mind
The lowest of the low.



And yet, O inconsistency!
Although the turtle is to me
A most obnoxious beast,
When on a menu card I spy
"Green Turtle, Soup," though it comes high,
I take two plates at least!

The Laughing Willow

MICHAEL O'LEARY

WHEN forming one of a storming party which advanced against an enemy's barricade, O'Leary rushed to the front and himself killed five Germans who were holding the first barricade, after which he attacked the second barricade, about sixty yards further on, which he captured after killing three of the enemy and making prisoners of two more.

You may talk of the Rebels of Ulster
And the shindy we had to chuck;
But we don't give a rap for a family scrap
Whin the Prooshuns is running amuck.

Did you hear how Lance Corporal O'Leary,
Mike O'Leary of the Guards,
Wid his own two mits, tore a forthress to bits
Like a blissed conthraction of cards.

He'd a shmile, had Mike, that 'ud span a dyke,
And a fist that 'ud fell a horse,
And he ripped through the mire of blood and
barbed wire,
Like a bull through a bunch of gorse.

The Laughing Willow

MICHAEL O'LEARY—[*Continued*]



Whin he waded in, sure 'twas a sin,
The way that he bashed and bruk 'em;
He dropped on thim Huns like forty tons,
And they niver knew what had struck 'em.

“Poor dears,” says Mike, “I’m thinking belike
All the news they’ve been told is lies,
So it’s up to me, ’ere it’s kilt they be,
To put the poor divils wise.

“Thim Huns, I’m told, while outrageous bold
Is over a trifle dull.

Sure, if that’s a fact, ’tis a friendly act
To hammer it through their skull.

The Laughing Willow

MICHAEL O'LEARY—[*Continued*]

“So here’s for insulting old Erin,
By thinking a thraitor she’d be!
And here’s for your Imperor sneerin’!
‘Contemptible army,’ says he.

“Here’s one for the mothers whose pleadin’
You stopped with a shot and a curse,
And one for the girls dead and bleedin’
And the girls that you spared—for worse.

“For the churches you shelled and the priests
you felled
Here’s one! And the women, too,
You held for a shield on the battle field,
And the innocent babes you slew.”

Whin O’Leary had done, there was divil a one
Left to tumble to what he said—
Barrin’ only ten, which I’m wrong again,
For eight av the ten was dead.



CLORINDA

A Fable for Heiresses

ABOVE the plate-glass window-pane,
Inviting every passing gaze,
Hung an inscription, large and plain,
"THE HUSBAND SHOP." This, in amaze,
Clorinda seeing, stopped wide-eyed,
And stared, then turned and stepped inside.

A floor-walker whose faultlessness
And condescending air proclaimed
One of the *table d'haute noblesse*,
[82]

The Laughing Willow

CLORINDA—[*Continued*]

Approached Clorinda and exclaimed,
With graceful undulating palm:
“Something in husbands? *Oui, Madame.*”

“We have the latest thing of all
In husbands; kindly step this way.
We’re using them on hats this fall,
In place of plume or floral spray,
The creature being pinned or tied
With chiffon bows on either side.”

He leads the way, all wreathed in smiles,
And wonderful in spotless spats
That flutter like twin butterflies
Along an avenue of hats,
Each one displaying on its brim
A husband—fashion’s latest whim.

Clorinda tries them each in turn
Before the glass; some are too small,
And some too cold, and some too stern,
And some are slightly soiled, and all,
When punctured by the hat-pin’s steel,
Betray by squirms how bored they feel.

The Laughing Willow

CLORINDA—[*Continued*]

At last Clorinda came to one

Marked "*Dibbs*," that scarce seemed worth her
while;

But when she tried it on for fun,

It met the hat-pin with a smile,
As if to say, "Oh, beauteous miss,
Even a stab from you is bliss!"

"The very thing! but thrown away

Upon a *hat*!" Clorinda cried.

"'T would make a sweet corsage bouquet."

The shoppers stared electrified,
To see Clorinda Dibbs depart
Wearing a husband next her heart.

The Laughing Willow

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER

Was a famous after-dinner
Speaker. Great the way
He secured, just by excelling
In the art of Story Telling,
One good meal a day.

Chestnuts more than often passé
He exchanged for Marrons Glacés,
Canvasback and Quail.
Flat the feast and dull the dinner
Lacking that accomplished Spinner
Of Postprandial Tale.

Every mail brought invitations:
Teas and luncheons and collations,
Dinners without end.
No one to a Formal Function
Such impressiveness, such unction,
Such éclat could lend.

The Laughing Willow

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

At that gruesomest of gruesome
Rites, The Banquet tendered to some
Literary Light,
None could say with such conviction,
“We have Snooks of *Snappy Fiction*
In our midst To-night.”

How he said it made no matter;
Shaft of Wit or Broadway Patter
Meets with like acclaim.
Latest Mot or Jest Historic,
To the dinner guest plethoric
It is all the same.

When he said, “This moment finds me
Unprepared,” or, “That reminds me,”
There would be a hum
Of expectance, or a rippling
As though Daniel (or Kipling)
Had to Judgment come.

Alas for Fame! As A. J. Skinner
Put it at the Author’s Dinner,
“Fame’s a fickle Jade!”
Had he then an intimation
That his own wide reputation
Was ere long to fade?

The Laughing Willow

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

From that day his after-dinner
Stories thinner grew and thinner.

Sorry was his case.
Rare the dinner invitation,
Rarer still the lunch—Starvation
Stared him in the face.

One day as his eye was wandering
O'er a map, he fell to pondering:
"If I cross the Main,
Somewhere 'twixt the Poles and Tropics
I may find some brand new Topics
For my food campaign!"

So one Friday A. J. Skinner
Bought a passage and an "Inner"
On a sailing ship;
Not for sport or relaxation,
Not for rest or recreation—
'Twas a business trip.

Fatal trip, had he but known it!
Or a Fortune Teller shown it
Written on his palm!—
How one morning bright and sunny,
With a breeze as soft as honey,
And a sea as calm—

The Laughing Willow

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

Somewhere in the South Pacific
There would spring up a terrific
Tropical typhoon—
Smite their helpless ship and bear it
On a mountain wave and tear it
Like a Toy Balloon.

Luckily for Mr. Skinner,
When she sank he was not in her.
Clinging to a Spar,
Being, too, an expert swimmer,
Soon he saw the breakers' glimmer
On a sandy bar.

Lucky, did I say? Appalling
Choice of words! Would you when crawling
Up a Sandbank gritty,
On firm land a foothold winning,
Call it luck to meet a grinning
Cannibal Committee?

Well, to make a long narration
Shorter (by abbreviation),
Soon as he was sighted
Alcibiades J. Skinner
To a most select Shore Dinner
Was at once invited.

The Laughing Willow

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

Never had the South Pacific
Witnessed such a beatific

Banquet as was here.

Never was such mirth unbounded
As when that far beach resounded

With unwonted cheer.

* * * * * *

Epicures on South Sea beaches
Waste no time on Toasts and Speeches;

Happy dreams had they.

In their midst was A. J. Skinner,
Most nutritious After-Dinner

Speaker of his day.

EVE

Apropos de Rien

It is not fair to visit all
The blame on Eve, for Adam's fall;
The most Eve did was to display
Contributory negligé.



THE Highbrow Hen

SAID Farmer Dole to his speckled hen,
"Why don't you lay for me now and then?"
Said the speckled hen to Farmer Dole,
"Because I've taken up birth control."

The Laughing Willow

SIR IPPYKIN

GRIM Giant Graft sate in his cavern dim;
A king's reward was offered for him dead.
He scowled to think it could not come to him,
That price upon his head.

Of all his foes he dreaded only one,
A knight of stalwart heart and spotless fame,
Who feared no creature underneath the sun—
Sir Ippykin his name.

One night to Ippykin there came a thought—
A mocking thought, that whispered in his ear:
“Ah, ha, Sir Knight! men say thou fearest naught;
They lie—thou fearest Fear!

Fear smites you when you read the king's decree
That whatsoever knight shall rid the land
Of Giant Graft will gain a golden fee,
Likewise his daughter's hand,

The Laughing Willow

SIR IPPYKIN—[*Continued*]

You fear to win, for fear that you must wed
The princess—for you love another maid;
You dare not lose the fight because you dread
Lest men call you afraid."

Cried Ippykin, "Lord, how shall I cut through
This tangled coil?" Then of a sudden laughed
A gleeful laugh, and rose and hied him to
The cave of Giant Graft.

No chronicler was present to reveal
What passed between the knight and Giant
Graft;
Or what the bargain was the which to seal
So many horns they quaffed.

But this is sure—thereafter from the lands
Of Ippykin once every week would stray
Certain fat sheep into the Giant's hands
In some mysterious way;

And once a week the giant and the knight
Would chase each other round in seeming strife,
Until the king grew weary of the sight,
And pensioned both for life.

The Laughing Willow

SIR IPPYKIN—[*Continued*]

Then Ippykin and his true love were wed
And both lived happy till they passed away;
But Giant Graft, fat, flagrant, and well fed,
Is living to this day.

The Laughing Willow

THE PSYCHOLOGY COP

THE New York Police Force is to be instructed in psychology.—*News Item.*

ONE morn, as Robert Ristwatch Rice
Sped *Childsward* for his midday meal,
Upon his shoulder, like a vise,
He felt a grip of steel.

And in his ear a voice there hissed
(With spirits fraught, and crime),
And something snapped around his wrist
That did not tell the time.

"I've pinched yer now!" (devoid of tact
Was Sergeant Fay). "For shame!
Yer Hun! I caught yer in the act
Insultin' that there dame!

"That skirt there in the showy lid,
And muff of classy fur."
"My word!" cried Robert Rice, "I did
Not even speak to her."

THE PSYCHOLOGY COP—[*Continued*]

“What’s words to me, just froth and foam!
I’m a psycholic guy—
I lamp yer thoughts inside yer dome
With my subconscious eye!”

“Then you should know,” said Rice, “I’m a
MISOGYNIST!”—“By Gee!
That settles you!” cried Sergeant Fay;
“You come along with me.”



PHYLLIS LEE

BESIDE a Primrose 'broider'd Rill
Sat Phyllis Lee in Silken Dress
Whilst Lucius limn'd with loving skill
Her likeness, as a Shepherdess.
Yet tho' he strove with loving skill
His Brush refused to work his Will.

The Laughing Willow

PHYLLIS LEE—[*Continued*]

“Dear Maid, unless you close your Eyes
I can not paint to-day,” he said;
“Their Brightness shames the very Skies
And turns their Turquoise into Lead.”
Quoth Phyllis, then, “To save the Skies
And speed your Brush, I’ll shut my Eyes.”

Now when her Eyes were closed, the Dear,
Not dreaming of such Treachery,
Felt a Soft Whisper in her Ear,
“Without the Light, how can one See?”
“If you are *sure* that none can see
I’ll keep them shut,” said Phyllis Lee.

The Laughing Willow

MRS. SEYMOUR FENTOLIN

IT was Mrs. Seymour Fentolin who stood there, a little dog under each arm; a large hat, gay with flowers, upon her head. She wore patent shoes with high heels, and white silk stockings. She had, indeed, the air of being dressed for luncheon at a fashionable restaurant.

From a story in *The Popular Magazine*.

THE lauded lilies of the field
Who toil not—neither do they spin,
The palm sartorial must yield
To Mrs. Seymour Fentolin.



A hat, French heels, white stockings,
dogs!

Not even Solomon could win
The championship for showy togs
From Mrs. Seymour Fentolin.

The two extremes in décolleté,
Of ballroom and of bathing beach,
Here meet in a bewildering way
And mingle all the charms of each.

The Laughing Willow

MRS. SEYMOUR FENTOLIN—[*Continued*]

I am no social butter-in,
I do not crave to meet her bunch,
But where does Mrs. Fentolin,
If one might venture—take her lunch?

And might one ask that peerless dame,
Without appearing impolite,
Is *Seymour* really her first name,
And has the printer spelt it right?

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES

I

THE Devil seeking some new way
To kill eternity, one day
 (So bored he was, in Hades)
Flew to Manhattan Isle to start
A Summer School to teach the art
 Of Smuggling to Ladies.

II

He opened in an uptown street
A Modiste's shop refined and neat
 (The number doesn't matter),
Displaying in his window all
The Modes—Spring, Summer, Winter,
Fall
 (Especially the latter).

III

The Ladies came in eager flocks,
And as he showed his Paris frocks,
 With dext'rous verbal juggling,
He lightly led the talk from Modes
To Customs—and the law that goads
 An honest girl to smuggling.



The Laughing Willow

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[*Continued*]

IV

"If Uncle Sam for Revenue,
Dear Ladies, picks your pockets, you
The compliment should bandy.
Pray let me teach you how to pick
The spangled pockets of that slick
Avuncular old Dandy.



V

"We can begin at once, if you
Will step this way." The giddy crew
Flocked after him like chickens

The Laughing Willow

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[Continued]

To where an effigy there hung
Of Uncle Sam with bells be-strung
Like Fagin's doll in Dickens.

VI

The Devil then with money fills
The dummy's pockets—gold and bills
And silver pieces mingling.
“Now try your skill! all you can take
Is yours, my dears, if you don't shake
The bells and set them jingling.”



VII

The news flew round, and soon the crush
Was like a bargain-counter rush
Of Frantic Ladies struggling;

The Laughing Willow

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[*Continued*]

And soon the Devil was about
A hundred thousand dollars out
And closed his School of Smuggling.

VIII

Exclaiming, "I'm behind the age!"
He kicked the dummy in his rage.
"What's this—the bells don't jingle!"
And sure enough the bells were dumb.
Deftly inserted chewing gum
Had stopped their tingle-tingle.

IX

"Ho! ho!" he laughed, "'tis plain to see
New York is too advanced for me.
I should have stayed in Hades;
For who the devil, pray, am I
In this enlightened age to try
My wit against the Ladies!"

The Laughing Willow

• SPRING

By his cold hearth, sans Youth, sans Mirth,
Sits poor old shivering Daddy Earth.



A knock, a footstep on the floor.

"Come in!" he growls—"and *shut that door!*"

The Laughing Willow

SPRING—[*Continued*]

Two soft hands on his eyelids press;
A laughing voice: "Who am I?—guess!"

"'Tis Mistress Spring! Alas, my dear,
You find me sadly changed, I fear."



"Cheer up!" cried Spring, "I bring for you
The Spell of Youth: Gold—Silver—Blue."

The Laughing Willow

SPRING—[*Continued*]

Sun gold, sky turquoise, silver rain,
And Daddy Earth was young again!

He danced, he sang: "Hail Spring divine!
Ethereal Spring—h'm—*wine?*—*pine—shine?*"

Too late the rhyme popped in his head;
"Be *mine!*" he sang—but Spring had fled.

THE CATFISH

THE saddest fish that swims the briny ocean,
The Catfish I bewail.
I can not even think without emotion
Of his distressful tail.
When with my pencil once I tried to draw one,
(I dare not show it here)
Mayhap it is because I never saw one,
The picture looked so queer.
I vision him half feline and half fisny,
A paradox in twins,
Unmixable as vitriol and vichy—
A thing of fur and fins.
A feline Tantalus, forever chasing
His fishy self to rend;
His finny self forever self-effacing
In circles without end.
This tale may have a Moral running through it
As Æsop had in his;
If so, dear reader, you are welcome to it,
If you know what it is!

THE PRODIGAL CENTIPEDE

ONCE to a Centipede a Snail
Remarked, "I wonder why you trail
Along the ground with such a lot
of feet—a hundred, is it not?
A hundred feet! when two or three
Are all you need. Just look at me!



The speed and ease with which I crawl,
And yet I have no feet at all!
In these days would it not be wise
For you to—well, to *Hooferize*?
You surely don't need more than two
To get along! If I were you,
I'd use one pair and stand up straight,
And save the other ninety-eight
Against a rainy day."

The Laughing Willow

THE PRODIGAL CENTIPEDE—[*Continued*]

“Indeed
You’re right!” replied the Centipede.
“I’ve often thought, to do my part,
’Twould be advisable to start
A Feetless Day—but then, you see,
If I stood upright I should be
A hundred feet in height, and I
Might bump my head against the sky!”
“Well,” said the Snail, “I must admit
That puts a different face on it!
Your life depends on lying flat!
Dear! Dear! I hadn’t thought of that!”



The Laughing Willow

A BALLADE OF BLACK SOCKS

PLAIN Black socks can never be wrong.

—*The Gentleman of Letters*
in "*Vanity Fair*."

LORDS of Fashion may disagree

On the question of questions, what to wear
At *déjeuner*, dinner, dance or tea,

"Feed informal" or "Smart affair."

Let not the neophyte despair

Dreading disdain of the gilded throng

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair

"Plain Black Socks can never be wrong."

Let scribes sartorial decree

Whether the "skirt" shall be full or spare,
Whether the crease be above the knee,

Whether the seam shall be here or there.
Of the openwork sock with the clock beware!

On Fancy's rein let your curb be strong!

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair,

"Plain Black Socks can never be wrong."

The Laughing Willow

A BALLADE OF BLACK SOCKS—[*Continued*]

Doubting dolts may be all at sea

Tossed on tempestuous waves of care.

Are they wearing two studs?—or one?—or three?

Will a satin tie cause a well bred stare?

Leave dressy deeds to dudes that dare!

Heed not the scented siren's song

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair,

“Plain Black Socks can never be wrong.”

L'envoi

Princes of Fashion, wherever ye fare—

London, Paris, New York, Hong Kong,

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair:

“Plain Black Socks can never be wrong.”

OTHER PEOPLE INCLUDING
MARK TWAIN

OTHER PEOPLE INCLUDING MARK TWAIN



Horace

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS

“How splendid to have men’s attire treated by a gentleman and litterateur.—*John Armstrong Chaloner.*”

AH me! Had Horace when his muse was flagging,
But given laughing Lalage a rest,
And kept Mæcenās’ pantaloons from bagging,
(Whatever ’twas he wore below his vest.)

The Laughing Willow

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS—[*Continued*]



If when his frisky Pegasus he mounted,
He'd sung, instead of the eternal *HER*
The stylish *HIM*, he might have been accounted
A gentleman as well as litterateur.

If Shakespeare had abstained from malty liquors,
And spent the time (when not purloining plays)
In pressing Francis Bacon's velvet knickers
He might thereby have gained a social raise.

If Tommy Moore when not devoutly pressing
His suit in amorous rhyme, had pressed instead
His patrons lordly "pants," it is past guessing
What titles had been showered on his head.

The Laughing Willow

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS—[*Continued*]

Had Bobby Burns renounced his Highland lassies,
And tuned his pipes to "Gentlemen's attire,"
He might in time have risen from the masses
And been addressed as Robert Burns, Esquire.

If Hall Caine—.....
.....
.....
.....but why drag in Hall Caine?

Come, Chaloner, confess like a good feller
By "Gentleman and litterateur" you meant
The literary style of the Best Seller
And the strictly pure refinement of the Gent.

THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS

"THE artists and writers were the first Americans to make themselves at home in this amusing Parisian resort. (*The Old Café Martin.*) And it was here, too, that women of the better class first tasted the delights of café life. It was considered quite a daring thing in the late eighties for be-cloaked and be-diamonded women of Fifth Avenue to sit here and sip their after-dinner coffee."

Vanity Fair.



ONE of those queer, artistic dives,
Where funny people had their fling.
Artists, and writers, and their wives—
Poets, and all that sort of thing.

The Laughing Willow

THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS—[*Continued*]

Here, too, to view the vulgar herd
And sip the daring demi-tasse—
Be-cloaked, be-diamonded, be-furred—
Came women of the better class.

With its Parisian atmosphere,
It had a Latin Quarter ring.
Painters and journalists came here—
Actors, and all that sort of thing.
Here, too, to watch the Great Ungroomed
And sip the dangerous demi-tasse,
Be-furred, be-feathered and be-plumed,
Came women of the better class.

Here Howells dined—Saint Gaudens, Nast,
Kipling, Mark Twain and Peter Dunne,
Nell Terry, and not least though last
One Robert Louis Stevenson.
And mingling with that underworld,
To sip the devilish demi-tasse,
Be-cloaked, be-diamonded, be-pearled,
Came women of the better class.

Like geese to see the lions fed,
They came—be-jewelled and be-laced,
Only to find the lions fled.
“My Word!” cried they, “What wretched taste!”

The Laughing Willow

THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS—[*Continued*]

Ermined and minked and Persian-lambed,
Be-puffed (be-painted, too, alas!)
Be-decked, be-diamonded—be-damned!
The women of the better class.



The Laughing Willow

MARK TWAIN

A Pipe Dream

WELL I recall how first I met
Mark Twain—an infant barely three
Rolling a tiny cigarette
While cooing on his nurse's knee.



The Laughing Willow

MARK TWAIN—[Continued]

Since then in every sort of place
I've met with Mark and heard him joke,
Yet how can I describe his face?
I never saw it for the smoke.



At school he won a *smokeship*,
At Harvard College (Cambridge, Mass.)
His name was soon on every lip,
They made him “smoker” of his class.

Who will forget his smoking bout
With Mount Vesuvius—our cheers—
When Mount Vesuvius went out
And didn't smoke again for years?

The Laughing Willow

MARK TWAIN—[*Continued*]

The news was flashed to England's King,
Who begged Mark Twain to come and stay,
Offered him dukedoms—anything
To smoke the London fog away.

But Mark was firm. "I bow," said he,
"To no imperial command,
No ducal coronet for me,
My smoke is for my native land!"



For Mark there waits a brighter crown!
When Peter comes his card to read—
He'll take the sign "No Smoking" down,
Then Heaven will be Heaven indeed.

PRINCE POMPOM

BENEATH a Fruitful Apple Tree
Sate Pompom, youth of high degree,
And Prince of Apple-Tartary;
While in the branches overhead
The apples blushed with rapture red,
As from a great book on his knees
He read of the Hesperides,
And how, to win the apples gold,
One Hercules, a Hero bold,
A hundred-headed Dragon slew.
"How brave! How wonderful! How true!"
Exclaimed the apples, flushed and red.
"That proves what we have always said:
We come of Ancient Pedigree!
We're of the Applestocracy!
Our title cannot be denied."
Whereat they swelled and swelled with Pride
Until their High and Mighty Air
Was more than Apple Tree could bear.
"Come!" cried the Tree, "you must vacate
My boughs—they will not bear your weight!"

The Laughing Willow

PRINCE POMPOM—[*Continued*]

Pride goes before a fall.

Alas!

Next morning, prone upon the grass,
Blushing for shame, the Apples lay,
And when Queen Pompom passed that way
She picked them up, and by and by
She made them into Apple Pie.

The Laughing Willow

THE SERIAL

To the Tune of Tennyson

*I burst upon the reader's eye
With verbal trumpet blaring,
Proclaiming me the latest cry
In fictionary daring—
Vital, compelling, hectic, rare,
Heart-gripping, epoch-making!
A woman's naked soul laid bare,
A climax record-breaking!
A quivering, pulsating plot,
The mystery of a red room,
A story to be read red hot
In boudoir, bath or bedroom,
An Eve, repentant, up to date,
Confesses what her fall meant;
You simply won't know how to wait
Until the next installment.*

I come from heaven knows where—or when.
My pedigree is shady.
My father was a Fountain Pen;
My mother, a Typelady,

The Laughing Willow

THE SERIAL—[*Continued*]

Who smote the keys from morn till night
With fingers swift and taper,
Till I appeared, all clean and bright,
On reams of foolscap paper.

And now in serial form I flow,
And flout at style and diction,
As like a babbling brook I go
To join the Sea of Fiction.

Some streams, I know, more deeply flow,
And some for speed endeavor.
Short stories come, short stories go,
But I'll go on forever.

I glitter like a foolish string
Of pearls, with polish painful,
With epigrams of doubtful ring
And platitudes Hall-Caineful.

And many a mood and tense amiss,
And metaphor amuddle,
And here and there a clinging kiss,
And here and there a cuddle—

The Laughing Willow

THE SERIAL—[*Continued*]

And here and there a phrase in French,
To give a touch linguisty;
And here and there a Fisher wench,
And here and there a Christy.

And here and there and everywhere
My thin stream slowly trickles
'Twixt *Bunk's Elixir for the Hair*
And *Black and Croswell's Pickles*.

And here a temperamental scene,
Fervid, intense, Byronic—
Tosses tempestuous between
Ayre's Soap and *Tinkham's Tonic*.

A sprightly conversation's flow
Is checked by *Soak and Stingham's*
Pink Pills, to reappear below
An ad for ladies' thingums.

The well-known slip 'twixt cup and lip
Here, too, finds confirmation—
"He raised his glass"—*Thy Anti-Grip!*
Beware of Imitations!

The Laughing Willow

THE SERIAL—[*Continued*]

—“Up to his lips; when on his wrist
He felt a grip, steel-sinewed;
The glass fell, and a hoarse voice hissed
The words”—*To be Continued.*

Editorial Note

*Some streams, we know, more deeply flow,
And some for speed endeavor.
Short stories come, short stories go,
But this goes on forever.*

THE CLOUD

An Idyll of the Western Front

SCENE: *A wayside shrine in France.*

PERSONS: Celeste, Pierre, a Cloud.

CELESTE (*gazing at the solitary white Cloud*):

I wonder what your thoughts are, little Cloud,
Up in the sky, so lonely and so proud!

CLOUD: Not proud, dear maiden; lonely, if you
will.

Long have I watched you, sitting there so still
Before that little shrine beside the way,
And wondered where your thoughts might be
astray;

Your knitting lying idle on your knees,
And worse than idle—like Penelope's,
Working its own undoing!

CELESTE (*picks up her knitting*): Who was she?

Saints! What a knot!—Who was Penelope?

What happened to *her* knitting? Tell me, Cloud!

CLOUD: She was a Queen; she wove her husband's
shroud.

CELESTE (*drops the knitting*).

The Laughing Willow

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

His shroud!

CLOUD: There, there! 'Twas only an excuse
To put her lovers off, a wifely ruse,
Bidding them bide till it was finished, she
Each night the web unravelled secretly.

CELESTE: He came home safe?

CLOUD: If I remember right,
It was the lovers needed shrouds that night!
It is an old, old tale. I heard it through
A Wind whose ancestor it was that blew
Ulysses' ship across the purple sea
Back to his people and Penelope.
We Clouds pick up strange tales, as far and wide
And to and fro above the world we ride,
Across uncharted seas, upon the swell
Of viewless waves and tides invisible,
Freighted with friendly flood or forkèd flame,
Knowing not whither bound nor whence we came;
Now drifting lonely, now a company
Of pond'rous galleons—

CELESTE: Oft-times I see
A Cloud, as by some playful fancy stirred,
Take likeness of a monstrous beast or bird
Or some fantastic fish, as though 'twere clay
Moulded by unseen hands.

CLOUD: Then tell me, pray,

The Laughing Willow

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

What I resemble now!

CELESTE: I scarcely know.

But had you asked a little while ago,

I should have said a camel; then your hump

Dissolved, and you became a gosling plump,

Downy and white and warm—

CLOUD: What! *Warm*, up here?

Ten thousand feet above the earth!

CELESTE: Oh dear!

What am I thinking of! Of course I know

How cold it is. Pierre has told me so

A thousand times.

CLOUD: And who is this Pierre

That tells you all the secrets of the air?

How came he to such frigid heights to soar?

CELESTE: Pierre's my—He is in the Flying Corps.

CLOUD: Ah, now I understand! And he's away?

CELESTE: He left at dawn, where for he would
not say,

Telling me only 'twas a bombing raid

Somewhere—My God! What's that?

CLOUD: What, little maid?

CELESTE (*pointing*): That—over there—beyond
the wooded crest!

CLOUD: Only a skylark dropping to her nest;

Her mate is hov'ring somewhere near. I heard

The Laughing Willow

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

His tremulous song of love—

CELESTE: That was no bird!

(*Drops upon her knees.*)

O Mary! Blessed Mother! Hear my prayer!

That one that fell—grant it was not Pierre!

Here is the cross my mother gave me—I

Will burn the longest candle it will buy!

CLOUD: Courage, my child! Your prayer will not
be vain!

Who guards the lark, will guide your lover's plane.

The West Wind's calling. I must go!—Hark!

There

He sings again! *Le bon Dieu garde, ma chere!*

II

PIERRE: I made a perfect landing over there

Behind the church—

CELESTE: The Virgin heard my prayer!

Now I must burn the candle that I vowed—

PIERRE: Then 'twas our Blessed Lady sent that
Cloud

That saved me when the Boche came up behind.

I made a lightning turn, only to find

The Boche on top of me. It seemed a kind

Of miracle to see that Cloud—I swear

The Laughing Willow

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

A moment past the sky was everywhere
As clear as clear; there was no Cloud in sight.
It looked to me, floating there calm and white.
Like a great mother hen, and I a chick.
She seemed to call me, and I scurried quick
Behind her wing. That spoiled the Boche's game,
And gave me time to turn and take good aim.
I emptied my last drum, and saw him drop
Ten thousand feet in flames—

CELESTE (*shuddering*): Stop! Pierre, stop!

Maybe a girl is waiting for him too—

PIERRE: 'Twas either him or me—

CELESTE: Thank God, not you!

PIERRE (*pointing to the church*): Come, let us burn
the candle that you vowed.

CELESTE: Two candles!

PIERRE: Who's the other for?

CELESTE: The Cloud!

FINIS



